

October 22, 2008

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste  
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

Humboldt County Department of Public Works – Sprowel Creek Road, Post Mile 0.60,  
Storm Damage Repair  
WDID No. 1B08088WNHU

Humboldt County

On May 15, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to replacing a damaged culvert under Sprowel Creek Road and restoring the scoured embankment near the culvert outlet. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with an unnamed tributary to the South Fork Eel River in the Benbow Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.32.

Heavy rains in late 2005 and early 2006 resulted in storm damage to an existing 24-inch diameter and 40-foot long culvert and the adjacent over-side storm drain pipe. High flows also caused erosion of the channel and embankment around the culvert outlet. The proposed project involves removal of the existing, installation of a new 24-inch diameter and 40-foot long culvert, and repairing the embankment.

The existing 18-inch diameter over-side drain and down-drain pipes will be removed. A 40-foot long, 8-foot wide, and 7-foot deep area will be excavated across the road and the existing culvert will be removed. The new culvert will be placed in the excavation and covered with crushed rock backfill. Quarter-ton rock riprap will be placed around the culvert outlet for erosion protection. The 18-inch diameter over-side drain will be reset with new anchors and a new flared end section will be installed at the inlet along the road. After the new culvert and over-side drain are installed the disturbed section of road will be repaved with asphalt.

Culvert excavation and replacement activities will temporarily impact 320 square feet and 40 linear feet of ephemeral stream channel that is already filled by an existing culvert and fill. The proposed 24-inch diameter and 40-foot long culvert will be placed in the same location as the existing culvert and will not result in any additional permanent impacts to the stream channel.

Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation includes seeding and mulching disturbed areas. Noncompensatory mitigation also includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control and for operation of heavy equipment near a stream channel. All disturbed areas will be seeded and mulched upon completion of the project. Heavy equipment will be operated from the roadway and all construction activities will take place during the dry season when there will be little or no water in the stream channel.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under nationwide permit, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. The County of Humboldt determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 – existing facilities, and Section 15304 – minor alterations to land. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this

project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1, Section 15301 – existing facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.